

The Action Group

Community

Newsletter

Edition N°2 - December 2020

- Story of the month -

John's iPad

'I really enjoy my family zoom calls and look forward to them every week, we get to catch up on each other's news and we have a good laugh together.'

'I miss my family and it makes me happy to see and speak to them every week.'

- John



John and his family want to share with you something positive that happened to them during the lockdown. [Read more](#)

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Communications



John's iPad

1.1



“John is my older brother and to help with communication, in between my monthly visits to him, I bought an iPad for John as I thought videocalls would be better him than just our usual phone call. This was quite fortuitous as life for us all was about to change.

I was due to visit John on the 29 March but for some reason I changed it to the 21 March which meant that the iPad for John was delivered before the dreaded lockdown.

The iPad meant that John and I could have FaceTime talks on Friday evenings instead of our weekly phone calls.

This went on for a few weeks and the lockdown did not seem to be coming to an end anytime soon the family decided to start a weekly Zoom call on a Sunday afternoon.

He loves these Zoom meeting so much so that he bumped me from our Friday evening calls.

Family dip in and out when they can but John never misses. He loves the excitement when someone comes into the waiting room and tries to guess who it is.”

– Jane,
John's sister



John's iPad

1.1

A happy thought...

"My cousin John has learning difficulties; he is now in his late sixties and he lives in a flat where he gets support.

My whole life I have only seen John when I visit Scotland - he lives in Edinburgh and I live in Wales. Usually, he has regular visits from his sister Jane but this has temporarily stopped due to restrictions.

Instead of concentrating on the negatives here is some positivity. Every Sunday since March, without fail, we have had a family Zoom call. Various family members, sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews and grand nieces and nephews drop in and out, sometimes (particularly when small children are involved) it is brief but that does not matter. We share birthdays, news, jokes, we have all worn silly hats... It is lovely and has brought the family together from as far afield as America, Wales, Scotland and various locations in England.

John loves these meetings and so do we. I think I have only missed one because I enjoy them so much, and I have got to know my big cousin so much better. I know we will continue these.

So that is it really. On the first day of lockdown in a very wet and windy Wales, appreciate what you have, focus on the positives, and find a way around the negatives. I have re-learnt what is important this year and it isn't the fancy restaurants, holidays and shops that's for sure.

Throughout this difficult year talking with John has not only helped him but all the family. His infectious laugh keeps us all going. He tells us off if we have our hands up on our faces, calls us bad if he thinks we have done something wrong.

He loves it when his nieces and nephews come on with their children and chaos can reign. He likes to make faces so of course we have to do them back."

– Belinda, John's cousin





HACCS

1.17

Falkirk

Steven decided during lockdown he would like to get healthier and lose weight. His support staff have been helping him reach his goals offering encouragement, advice, and going on long walks with him during his support. Steven has been amazing, staying focused, has had no McDonalds or KFC throughout and cut down his crisp intake dramatically. He never used to like walking but now strides up the hills leaving staff in his wake.

Part of Steven's support is to meet his friend Alex. Steven's health kick has had a good influence on Alex as he also has a healthy packed lunch and enjoys the company whilst getting the exercise too.

This is what they have to say about it:

"Exercise really helped me lose weight. I mean, in all honesty it all depends on discipline, the patience you must have and know what your limit is. I just did it at my pace. It is good doing it with people, it's good to get them exercise too and if they lose weight that's a win in my book."

- Steven



"I enjoy doing the exercise with Steven as we get a lot of walking done which is very good exercise and I enjoy the fresh air as it is quite refreshing when you're walking. I feel happy walking with Steven as we just chat away while walking around, especially the hill is quite hard sometimes so it's good to have a distraction."

- Alex



Falkirk

'That Summer of 2020'

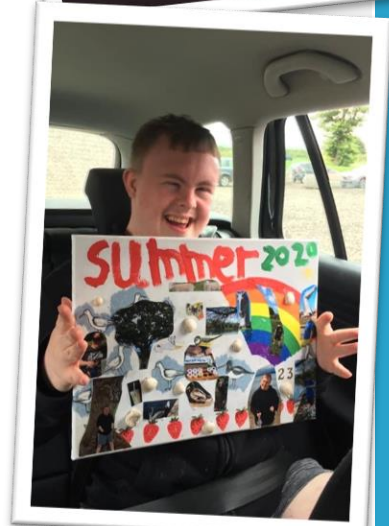
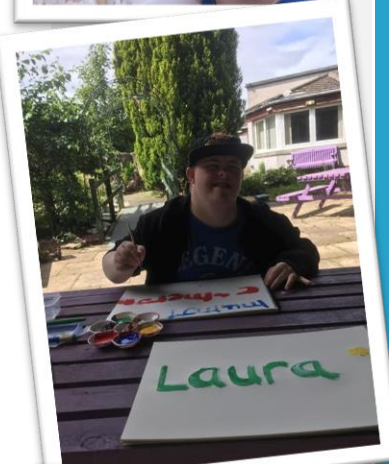
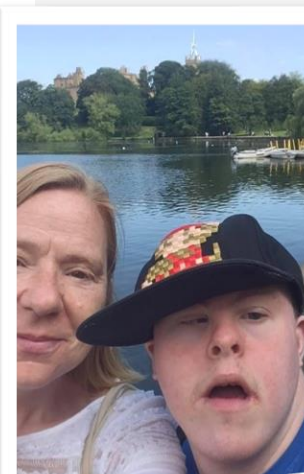
I feel proud to be part of The Action Group. I feel proud to be 'a front-line worker'. When the world seemed to turn upside down in an instant, we were able to adapt and change and stay connected to those who use our service, to maintain contact and support in a creative way. While services were closed and outdoor support was all that was available Cameron and I found ourselves out and about locally; walking and bird watching in South Queensferry, playing Scrabble by Linlithgow Loch, painting stones at Callendar Park, strolling round The Kelpies, picking strawberries at Craigie's Farm and visiting The Five Sisters Zoo to mention just a few, and all with a fine picnic (Cameron inspired me to eat a healthier lunch!).

My knowledge and understanding of Cameron's communication style developed rapidly throughout this time; his wide range of signing, spoken and written words surprised and delighted me every day (a positive side effect of the restrictions!). Cameron's mum Carrie-Anne shared that during this time "his verbal communication has really come on and his signing as well, this has had a positive impact on him. Cameron loved his summer fun and adventures with you and always came back happy and relaxed. This reflected in his artwork that he displayed with pride in his room".

So really it was a win – win; I was so happy to maintain some 'normality' with work throughout these strange times and to share the joy in all these experiences with Cameron is something I will never forget.

That Summer of 2020 will be remembered for lots of different reasons, we have all had to change and adapt to new ways. However, I will also reflect on the positives; Cameron and I got to know each other so well in a few short months which otherwise might have taken years and I look forward to our continued work together.

- Laura Wilkinson, Support Worker





CAATS

2.1

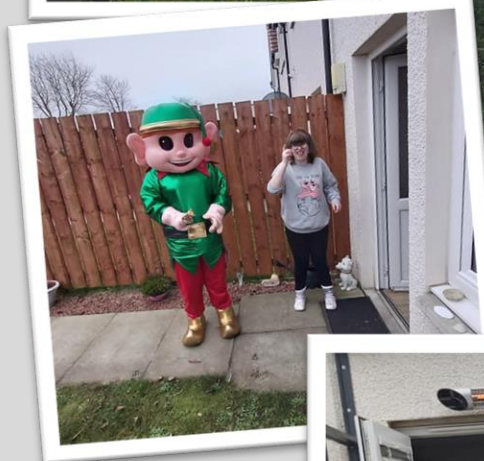


I just wanted to share with everyone the amazing work that **Dan** has done in Midlothian over the past few days. Dan has been delivering Christmas gifts for everyone we support!!

Dan has been working on this project with support staff for the last month helping organise everything - even today he was keeping me right.

Well done Dan you did a fantastic job 🎄 🎄

- Samantha Burns
Support Worker





Real Jobs

Laura has worked at the Royal Mail Depot café for 20 years which she celebrated this year.

Unfortunately, Laura, like many others, shielded and was not at work for many months.

Laura is now back at work and coping well with all the changes that have been put in place due to Covid 19.

Laura's main duties were dishes and cleaning duties, however as this is a joint effort by the whole team, Laura is now taking on more kitchen assistant tasks as well as carrying out her cleaning duties.

Laura's manager is mixing up Laura's chores to keep Laura's working day new and interesting. Recently Laura has been peeling the vegetables and baking.

**Well done Laura,
taking on new jobs at work!**



If you live in Edinburgh with a health condition or a disability and are looking for a job or are at risk of losing your job, please contact us! We can assist you every step of the way into employment or to retain your job.

If you would like to know more please send us a message or email us at realjobs@actiongroup.org.uk



Congratulations!

Assistant Team Manager - CAATS 2.2

Rebekah is acting up as ATM in 2.2.

Rebekah has been working in The Action Group since October 2017.

She is enthusiastic about the support she delivers and loves how creative she can be in this job.

- Paisley Deighton
Team Managers



Digital activities coordinator

We have employed a Digital Activities Coordinator who will be planning lots of online activities for everyone from January. Her name is Katie and you can contact her on support@actiongroup.org.uk

Katie would love to hear all your ideas about what kind of things you would like her to plan!

She will be in touch with surveys and questionnaires, but you can email her anytime to share any of your own ideas or things you would like to see as digital activities.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all

Merry Xmas!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all

Dear everyone,

Whoever you are, wherever you come from, however you do or do not celebrate Xmas, I wish you and your loved ones, every happiness for the future. Rest well, have some fun, be kind to yourself and remember how well you have done this year. **Thank you for being you and for being part of The Action Group.** Keep following the rules and stay safe and we will be able to see each other and those we love sooner in 2021.

*¡Feliz Navidad!
Joyeux Noël!
Frohe Weihnachten!
Buon Natale!
Wesołych Świąt!
Nollaig Shona*

*کَرابام سَم سِرک (krismas mubāarak)
"Nollaig chridheil agus bliadhna mhath ur"*

Thank you again for everything you had done to keep The Action Group safe and strong this year, in the most difficult of years. You are amazing!

Take care, stay safe and stay connected.

Linda Tuthill - CEO
Lindatuthill@actiongroup.org.uk

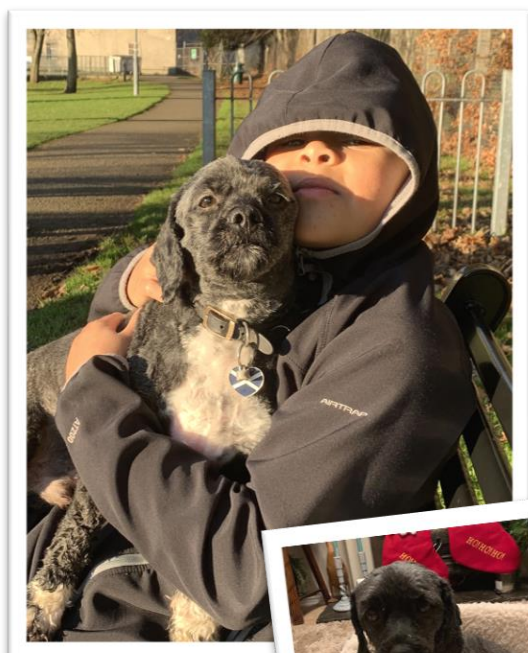


Linda Tuthill
Chief Executive
The Action Group





Furry Friends



Mikey

This is Mikey, his real name is Michelangelo after a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle.

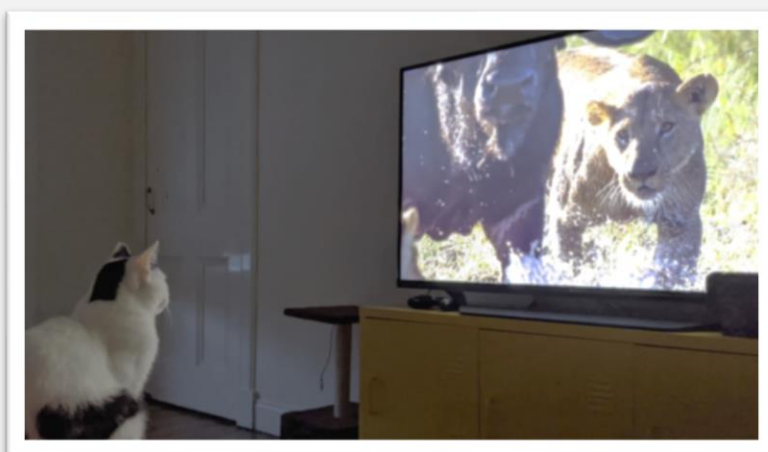
Mickey is a poodle-cross and is best friends with Hamish. Mikey likes Logan and I, but Hamish and Mikey have a very strong friendship. Mikey loves life. He is a little rebel, sometimes he likes to steal food from the kitchen worktop!

- Danny H
Deputy CEO

Ouzo

He is not really into Hollyoaks or Coronation Street but he really loves a good documentary. He feels right at home. He will not be happy if you distract him and he does not like noise when he is watching TV.

- Emmanuail P
Team Manager





Furry Friends

“Whoever says: It’s only a rabbit, has obviously never loved a rabbit”

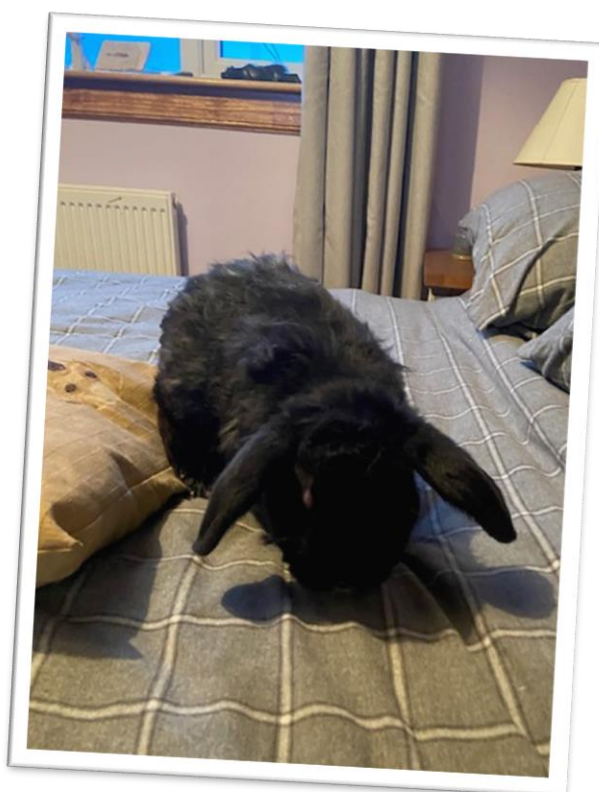
This is Anita, **my little black lop rabbit**. She is approx. **13 years of age** (she was a rescue bunny, so they guessed her age when she came to live with me) and she is a really brave and fiery bunny. She lives in the house but has access to a safe space outside, however given her age she tends to go out in better weather only. Anita shares the room I work in with me, as well as the rest of the house.

Rabbits are complex creatures and normally live in bonded pairs or small groups. However, Anita’s pair bond companion, Marley (a harlequin lop), died a few years ago. Taking advice from rabbit experts I made the decision to leave her as a solo rabbit as it was unlikely at her age that she would accept another rabbit. However, my ginger cat George spends time with her as do I. The dogs are allowed to be with her as long as I am around, as they can be a bit frightened of her and may try to nip her.

Anita does not eat lettuce, in fact, rabbits should not eat lettuce; this is a myth, and it is bad for them. Anita eats lots of different veg (cabbage etc) and carrots (although you need to limit these as they are quite fattening for rabbits). Anita’s favourite food is cavolo nero (dark kale); banana (again you need to limit how much you give), and hay, especially hay with apple and dandelions through it.

Looking after her is not easy, in general rabbits need a lot of space, love, special food and clean hay but I do not mind it as rabbits are such intelligent and curious creatures. Having Anita in my life is such a privilege.

- **Linda T, Chief Executive**



Did you now? Rabbits are prey animals, so they do not show they are unwell or show they are in pain, as if they did this in the wild it would put them at risk from foxes etc. So, you need to really get to know them well to just know when something is not right.



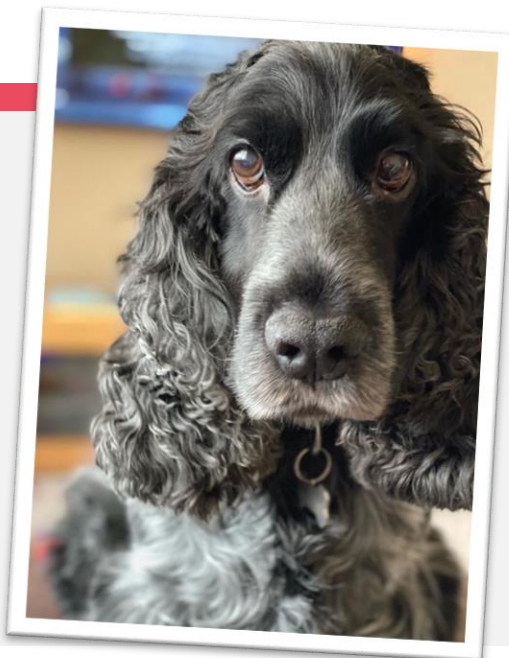
Furry Friends

Parker

This is Parker. Parker is an 8-year-old cocker spaniel.

He is an amazing dog. So well behaved and gentle. Especially around children.

- Jen Do, Development Manager



Neil

Neil is my little cat. I got her from a rescue in Cyprus. She is blind and has quite a lot of health conditions – she even had Coronavirus when I first got her – although that was before most of us had heard of it! She is very small and looks like a kitten but she is nearly 3. She has a growth defect so will always be very small.

Neil likes to appear on video calls when I am working from home. She has learned to open the doors in my house so it is impossible to keep her away. If you leave a plate or a cup on the table she will knock it off. If there is anything on a shelf, she will knock it off. She breaks things a lot. She tries to eat the Hoover when I am cleaning. She jumps up in the kitchen and tries to eat whatever I am cooking. She even tried to eat from my plate.

She is very affectionate and loves people and always wants to be sitting on my knee, or shoulder, or head... look out for her whenever I am on a teams or Facebook live!

- Lisa W, Development Manager





Events

THE
Action
GROUP

2020

Super WOW

Has someone done something incredible this year?

Who do you think at The Action Group has gone above and beyond and deserves special recognition?

Click the link to nominate - you can also submit video nominations if you prefer not to type.

JANUARY 28 AT 2 PM 2021

A SPECIAL WOW AWARDS EVENT

FOR ALL THE PEOPLE SUPPORTED AND EMPLOYED AT THE ACTION GROUP

On **January the 28th**, at **2pm**, we will be hosting a special love WOW Awards afternoon LIVE on Teams!

WOW Awards are a way that we can recognise and thank the people around us for doing things that we think are extra special. WOW Awards have been going in The Action Group for a long time, but we are doing a very special Super WOW Awards as an extra event.

Between now and the 4th January, you can nominate anyone you would like for a Super WOW Award. This can be someone you support, or someone who supports you – the awards are for everyone.

You can [click here](#) to make a nomination. You can do this by typing it out, or by uploading a wee video.

Lisa Williamson
Development Manager

Nominate someone special by [clicking here](#)!





Learning & Development

The Learning & Development Team want to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas!

Thank you to each and everyone of you who have supported our digital training experiences and for forgiving all the IT glitches that can be experienced. We look forward to doing more in 2021 - *take care!*

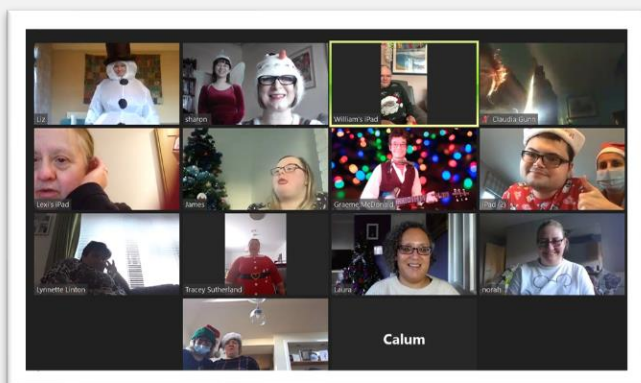
Sing & Sign Group



Our Sing & Sign Group had an amazing Christmas session with a special guest, Graeme from Magic Music.

We enjoyed songs and music together and hope we brought some Christmas cheer.

We hope we can see you in our next session!
January 28th 2021 - 1:30pm – 3pm.



A big shout to Liz, who surprised us with her idea of PPE. To be worn at all times during Xmas support.



For more information, please email Sharonyeoman@actiongroup.org.uk or ElizabethTaylor@actiongroup.org.uk

Congratulations to staff for completing Mental Health First Aid training



Jane Anderson - Stijn Baecke - Heather Baxter - Laura Bilton - Maria Chalkou - Carmen Cocoi - Keith Fricker - Emmanouil Petakis - Aeonie Ramsay - Karen Young - Martin Rogerson - Julian Sanchez - Claire Scott - Alison Thomason - Aimee Young

If you are interested in the Mental Health First Aid training, please contact [Justyan Kubicka](mailto:Justyan.Kubicka@actiongroup.org.uk)



Recruitment



To: Our November Starters

Freya	Team 2.01
Isabel	Team 2.01
Samantha	Team 1.04
Marie	Team 1.10
Sophia	Team 1.09
Gregory	Team 1.02
Irene	Team 1.10
Isobel	Team 1.09
Lara	Team 1.08
David	Team 2.03
Alasdair	Team 2.03
Nicola	Team 1.05
Victoria	Team 1.10
Ioanna	Team 1.05
Karen	Team 1.05

We hope that you have had a great first few weeks working at The Action Group! By joining us, you have become part of an organisation that values people and a life with no barriers. You have joined a company that understands that this job is more than turning up to work.

From us: Welcome to our family, you are now part of The Action Group!

- Pilar Sanmartin, HR Advisor



Advice



in The Action Group we want to help you stay!

Stay in Scotland

Scotland wants EU citizens to stay here after the transition period for Brexit. So, do not put it off, get help to stay now at [mygov.scot/stayinScotland](https://www.mygov.scot/stayinScotland). You will find clear, step-by-step advice and all the support you need.

- Following decisions by the UK Government the **UK has now left the EU**.
- EU citizens and their families will have to apply to the UK Government's EU Settlement Scheme **by 30 June 2021** in order to continue living, working and studying in the UK after that date.
- The Scottish Government launched the **Stay in Scotland campaign** in April 2019 to raise awareness of the need for EU citizens to apply to the UK Government's EU Settlement Scheme, and to provide the necessary support to allow people to make their application.
- EU citizens who have been in the UK **for five continuous** years will be able to apply for **settled status**. EU citizens who have been in the UK **less than five years** can apply for **presettled status**. After five years continuous residency they can then apply for settled status. For further information please visit: www.mygov.scot/stayinScotland
- The Scottish Government has produced a package of support to help EU citizens stay in Scotland. This package of support includes: guide for EU citizens; guide for employers of EU citizens; factsheet and leaflets. You can download this at www.gov.scot/stayinScotland
- The Scottish Government has worked with JustRight Scotland to publish a number of factsheets explaining EU citizens' rights in Scotland. The factsheets provide information on EU citizens' rights to vote, work and access healthcare, education, housing and benefits. <https://justcitizens.scot/EU>



You can also call the national Citizens Advice Scotland helpline **FREE** on **0800 916 9847**.



Edinburgh Health & Social Care

Edinburgh Health and
Social Care Partnership



colleague briefing

Over the festive period:

- help yourself to a healthy festive season:
 - know when your surgery is open over the festive period
 - make sure you order enough medication or repeat prescriptions in advance
 - know how to find out where the nearest emergency pharmacy is (phone NHS 24 on **111**).
- if you feel unwell, **phone NHS 24 on 111** and you'll be guided to the right service



Throughout winter:

- if you feel unwell, **phone NHS 24 on 111** and you'll be guided to the right service
- know your self-management plan if you have a long-term condition
- take action to guard against falls, particularly if you are unsteady on your feet
- keep your medicine cabinet stocked with cold and flu treatments
- eat well and keep your cupboards stocked in case you can't get to the shops
- stay warm
- know what to do in the event of severe weather
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/severe-weather



Support for carers - Edinburgh Carer Support team: 0131 536 3371

Open Monday to Friday during business hours. During the festive period on 28, 29, 30 and 31 December, and 4 January: 0131 622 6666

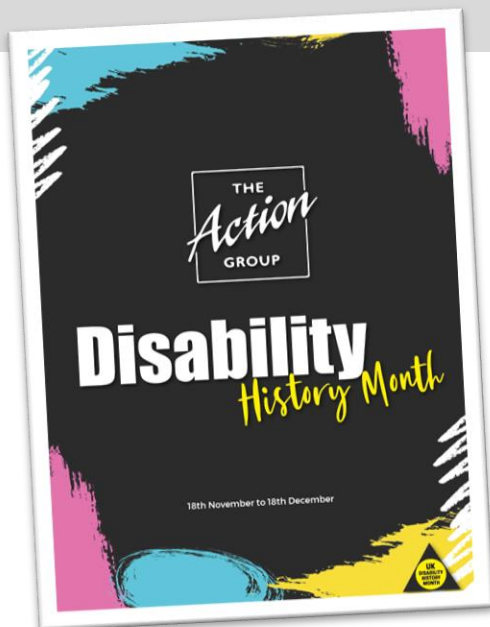
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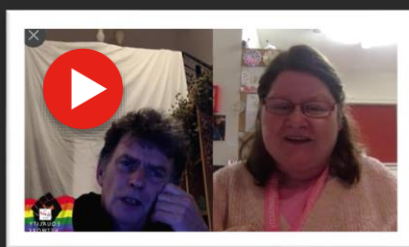
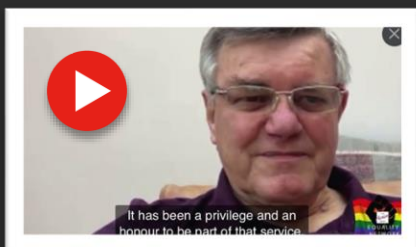
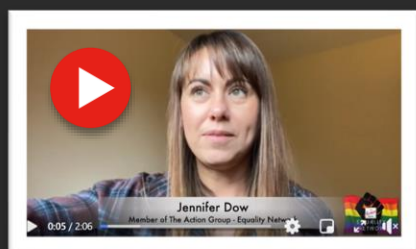
Equality Network

18th November 2020 – 18th December 2020



Throughout the month we took you on a journey from the history of The Action Group a disability charity which was founded by a group of parents and carers who were not satisfied with the support that was available for their love ones in the 70s, to key historical moments over the years of disability equality in the UK. We also looked the hidden, less talked aspects about disability and equality.

Here is how we celebrated the valuable contributions and achievements of people from the disability community. **#DisabilityHistoryMonth**



If you would like to get involved with the **Equality Network** you are more than welcome!
You can email us at equality@actiongroup.org.uk



Communications

Investors in People **Exclusive!**

As you may know, in 2017 we were awarded Investors in People Gold award. This was something we were very proud of. It means that we are good employers, and at a gold standard.

Ever since then, our IIP focus group has been working on making improvements based on the comments and feedback provided by all of our staff through a survey that was sent to everyone. We have made lots of changes, and lots of improvements.

We are very excited and delighted to be able to announce that we have now been given the **Platinum award!**



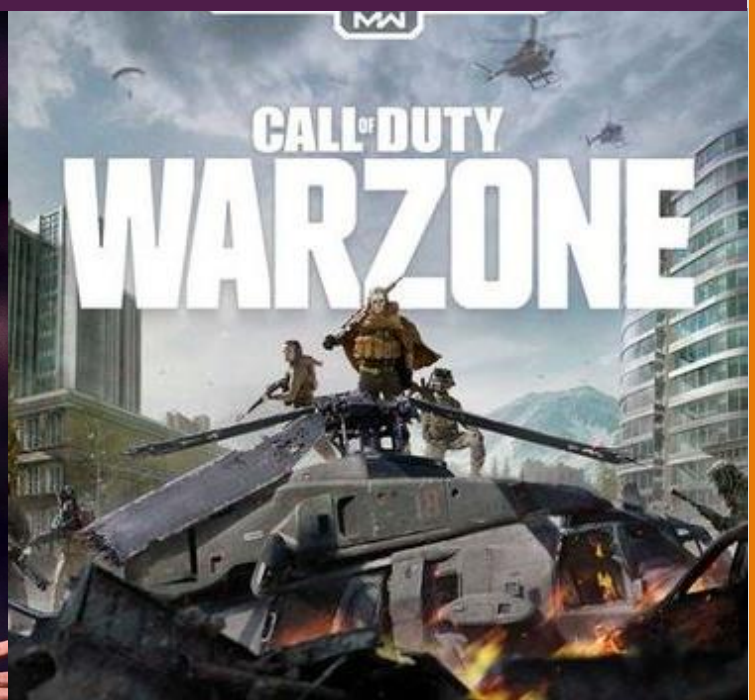
We would like to thank every single person who was involved in the focus groups, and who completed the survey. At The Action Group, we are committed to doing what we can to make this a great place to work for everyone we employ, and we can't do that without your help, feedback and support.

Thank you – and please be assured we are still always working on making things even better for you!



Communications

E-sport Tournament **January 2021**



With the excitement and buzz created around November Esports, Business Fives are excited to once again remotely host corporate charity FIFA and Call of Duty tournaments online in January.

The action starts on the evening of Tuesday 19th at 6pm culminating on Finals night on Friday 22nd January.

If you are interested, please email communications@actiongroup.org.uk with your name and the team you work with.

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Communications

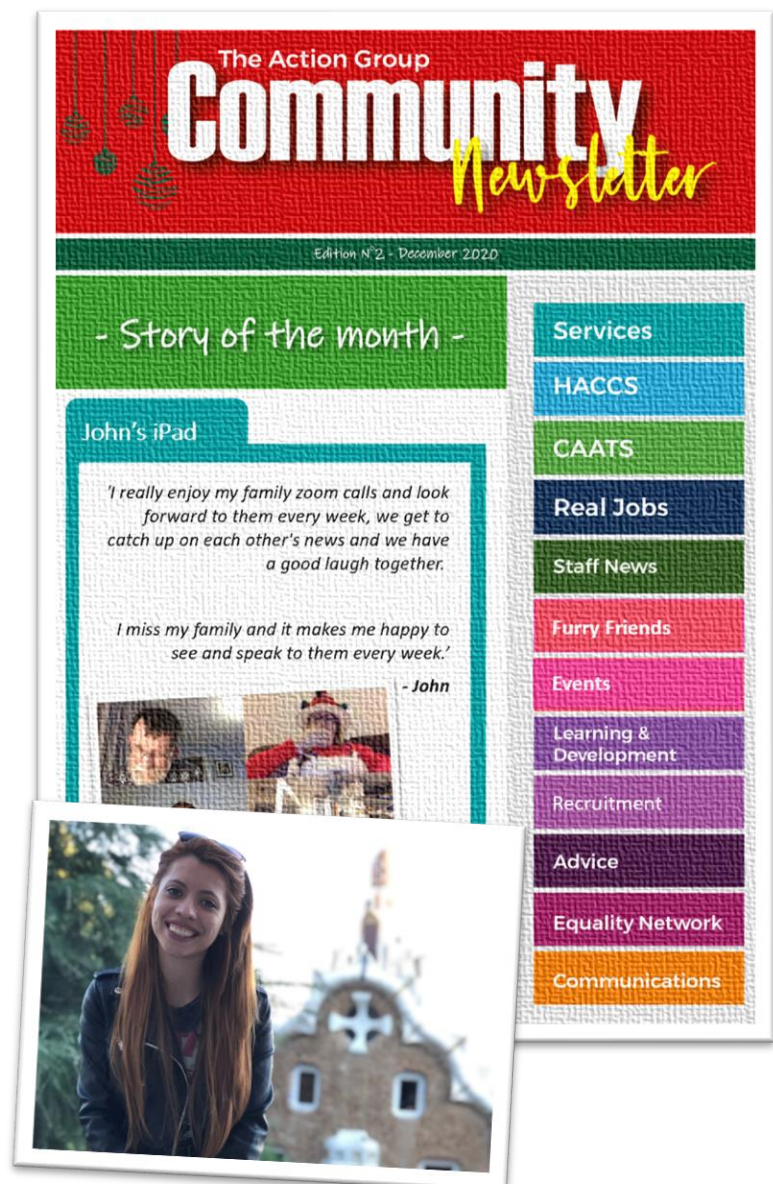
To our readers,

We hope you enjoy the Second edition of **TAG Community Newsletter**.

Even though this year has been difficult in different ways for all of us, I hope you have a safe holiday season, full of videocalls, movies, and cosy pyjamas. Create new traditions and new memories to share.

Best wishes,

JohannaMR
Communications Officer



A special **thanks** to everyone who contributed with their stories and information. If you or the person you support would like to share a story and pictures, please email it to your **Team Manager** and they will pass it on to us.